

question: What does it take to be prosperous and to have prosperity for future generations?

There are many answers to that question, but one of the keys is science, technology, engineering, and math—the STEM fields—in our educational system.

The United States needs to be able to compete in these fields on a global scale, and children of all schools should have the opportunity to develop these skills no matter where they live.

Recently, teachers in the Second District of New Mexico brought up the question: What about us? Can we use funds that are set over here in the Education Department to develop better skills in the STEM areas?

Those questions were not answered in a completely positive way—that maybe it was not possible. Therefore, the teachers put forward an idea that maybe we should just get the flexibility in, a practical suggestion for an important concept.

Teachers and educators in the Second District provided firsthand experience and developed the idea into a concept. Several teachers formed an ad hoc working group. Brian Claar from White Sands Schools, Lindsey Guerrero and Marci Hearn from Gadsden Independent School District, Marci Behrens from Las Cruces Public School District, as well as Susan Brown, Nicole Delgado, and Christina Abeyta from the New Mexico State University STEM Outreach Center, all came together and developed that concept into a proposed legislation.

Working with my staff, they actually got the bill written, and on June 25 of this year, I introduced H.R. 4973, titled: Spurring Teacher Education Movement for STEM Act, also known as the STEM for STEM Act.

H.R. 4973 increases flexibility for teacher development funds under the Rural and Low Income title of the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965. It allows the funds to be used for teacher development in teaching STEM.

The STEM for STEM Act also expresses the need for the U.S. to compete on a global scale. A teacher should have the high-quality professional development opportunities in STEM to increase their content knowledge and improve student learning.

Professional development is essential for providing teachers and educators with growth opportunities that then are presented to our children.

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Teacher professional development enriches the learning environment for students and educators alike. It is important for us to say thank you to those teachers who make it possible for America to compete into the next generation.

Hopefully, this bill, H.R. 4973, will provide a small element of help for the rural areas that stretch across the Western part of this country.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the importance of comprehensive immigration reform and the growing humanitarian crisis we are facing at our southern border.

It is the job of the Congress to face and resolve challenging issues like our broken immigration system. We ought to pass the bipartisan Senate bill that would provide commonsense solutions to address not only reforming our immigration system, but to deal with this immediate humanitarian crisis at our border.

Instead, the Republican House leadership refuses to allow a vote on comprehensive reform and has come up, instead, with a plan that would change the law passed in 2008 to combat human trafficking. In addition, this partisan bill will provide limited funding for this fiscal year.

Again, House leadership plans to pass a short-term fix, so that they can go back to their districts next month and say: well, we tried to fix this crisis that we are facing.

This is not how we should be solving our Nation's problems. Each day that our immigration system remains broken, jobs are lost, and our economy suffers. It is time to set politics aside and focus on fixing our current immigration system. In fact, failure to address reform is making it more difficult to deal with the thousands of unaccompanied children arriving at our southern border in hopes of finding safety.

The humanitarian crisis that we are facing is in part a result of the increasing turmoil in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, where drug trafficking, human trafficking, and violence is rampant. Families have been tortured and killed, and today, there are people who are literally running for their lives.

Atrocities are being committed in those countries, and they must bear the responsibility of addressing and resolving their issues. Mexico also has a role to play.

We in the United States must now face the humanitarian crisis this violence is causing at our southern border. In a joint statement, President Obama, along with Presidents from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, pledged to reduce criminal activity in Central American countries by promoting greater social and economic opportunity.

It is my hope that these leaders stay true to their word and demonstrate leadership by addressing the humanitarian crisis taking place within their own countries.

These young unaccompanied children must be treated in a humane and dignified way. Ultimately, these children's fate rests in the hands of our immigration judges, and those children who are not granted asylum must return to

their countries. Playing politics with this grave crisis, as some are doing, is not productive.

It is the height of hypocrisy that Republicans want more border security, but have refused to allow a vote on a comprehensive immigration reform bill that would in fact provide more funding to secure our borders. That makes no sense. We have spent billions of dollars on border security, but clearly, our border is not yet secure.

The comprehensive immigration reform bill passed by the Senate in a bipartisan fashion requires that a long-term plan be developed and executed with an initial \$8.3 billion in funding to focus on securing the borders today and an additional \$6.5 billion in funding to be spent over the next 6 years to in fact secure our border.

What we need now, more than ever, is an open and honest discussion on the House floor about the relationship between immigration reform and this humanitarian crisis. Therefore, I urge my Republican colleagues to join together, in a bipartisan fashion, like they did in the Senate, to find an effective and humane short- and long-term solution to this crisis, which is directly related, in my opinion, to fixing our broken immigration system.

ABLE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I want to bring attention to proposed legislation known as the ABLE Act, or Achieving a Better Life Experience. It is something that is important to me and to a lot of Members of the House.

I first filed this legislation 7 years ago. Since then, we have come a long way. Today, 377 Members of the House and 74 United States Senators are cosponsors of this legislation. There is no piece of legislation in the Congress today that enjoys more bipartisan, bicameral support than the ABLE Act. Tomorrow, the Ways and Means Committee in the House will take up this legislation, and I hope that they will pass it with a favorable vote.

Just what is the ABLE Act? It is a piece of legislation that attempts to help those individuals with disabilities achieve their full potential. How does it do that? Well, it allows individuals with disabilities to set up a tax-free savings account. They take that account, it grows tax free, and they can use the proceeds, as long as they meet qualified expenses.

Those individuals face challenges that you and I can sometimes hardly imagine. They might be medical, transportation, education, or housing needs. We already allow other individuals to use tax-exempt savings accounts to help them.

If you want to save for retirement, you can set up a tax-free savings account called a 401(k). If you want to set